

New urea center expected to trim fertilizer costs

By NAT WILLIAMS
AgriNews Publications

ST. LOUIS — Fertilizer distributor Agrotain International last week unveiled its new, \$20 million urea storage and manufacturing center that is the largest urea center in the world.

Company officials believe farmers will see the benefit of the project via lower prices and better utilization of nitrogen in their fields.

Agrotain's parent company, St. Louis-based Lange-Stegmann, hosted a celebration that drew hundreds of people to join in the ribbon cutting for the dual facility that will streamline manufacturing of the company's enhanced nitrogen products.

Rising demand was responsible for the investment, according to Mike Stegmann, company president.

"We made this investment to address skyrocketing demand worldwide for more nitrogen sources," Stegmann said. "This is the biggest urea import terminal in the United States and the biggest urease inhibitor plant in the world."

The Urea Center provides the company with warehousing of urea imported from around the globe. It has a storage capacity of 63,000 tons, and inventory can be turned over up to four times monthly.

Agrotain products are manufactured next door at the Stabilized Nitrogen Center, where the basic nitrogen commodity is converted to an enhanced product that allows more efficient uptake of fertilizer by plants.

Agrotain officials expect the investment to pay off by allowing the company to purchase price-volatile urea on the spot market and keep it on site. Before the facility was constructed, Agrotain used multiple manufacturing facilities to make its products.

The company will save on costs by having a central location used for import, storage and manufacturing, according to Jeff Whetstine, Agrotain's vice president for global marketing.



AgriNews photo/ Nat Williams

The St. Louis Urea Center brings together urea import, storage and manufacturing in one spot. The facility, on the banks of the Mississippi River, officially opened last week.

"We wanted to do something new," he said. "This gives us the advantage of purchasing urea at the lowest cost. That's a challenge we have with the global economy."

Like its farmer customers, Agrotain has been forced to deal with rising fertilizer costs.

"The U.S. market is only 5 percent of the fertilizer market," Whetstine said. "A lot of U.S. farmers don't realize that the population of India, China and a lot of other countries are hungry for protein. As agriculture expands there, so does demand for inputs like nitrogen."

St. Louis is the idea location for such a facility, according to Stegmann.

"This geographic location provides a competitive advantage over all other locations," he said. "It's the northernmost point on the Mississippi River that is lock- and ice-free year-round."

As many as four barges can be unloaded daily at the site. Urea travels down a covered conveyor to the warehouse. A truck can be loaded in six minutes and a rail car can be loaded in 22 minutes. The center is served by the Burlington Santa Fe Railroad.

The company utilizes an innovative technology that minimizes volatilization of ammonia with the aim of ensuring maximum uptake of nitrogen by plants.

"Within days of application, there's

a 30 percent loss of nitrogen into the air," Whetstine said. "We re-granulate it, adding a urease inhibitor that breaks down urea. That stabilizes nitrogen and makes it more efficient."

Missouri Director of Agriculture Don Steen told the crowd the center is a positive move that could have an impact on rising input costs for some producers.

"We've seen corn prices where they've never been before, but we're also seeing fertilizer at \$200 a ton," Steen said. "We must adapt, change and accept new ideas and new innovations that come our way. Agrotain is a good example. Inputs must be maximized, and the stabilization of nitrogen in urea is just one way to do that."

Profit Watch

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While it's always difficult to watch the market go lower as it has in recent weeks, there is a "silver lining". When December 08 corn was close to \$8 on the Chicago Board of Trade the spread from December 08 to July 09 was around 28 cents. This was actually rather wide at the time considering the uncertainty regarding crop size.

Recently that spread has widened to about 43 cents giving you the opportunity to roll your December hedges forward to July to capture a historical amount of carry.

Last year the maximum carry was about 36 cents. The carrying charges are surprisingly wider this year.

Let's look at an example that may apply to your situation. Do you have some December HTA contracts on the books?

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Illini's Salute to Agriculture slated Nov. 15

By TOM C. DORAN
AgriNews Publications

URBANA, Ill. — The action won't be limited to the football field when the University of Illinois squares off against Big Ten rival Ohio State on Saturday, Nov. 15.

Prior to the big game, the U of I College of ACES Alumni Association will host the annual Salute to Agriculture Day.

The College of ACES, the Illinois Department of Agriculture and Illinois commodities groups coordinate the event.

Festivities begin with a pre-game tent party two hours prior to kickoff. The tent will be located near the corner of Kirby Ave. and First St., one block west of the newly refurbished Memorial Stadium.

Game time will be announced at a later date.

Orion Samuelson of WGN Radio will host this year's celebration.

The tailgate salute will feature products from various Illinois commodity groups, a live auction, meal and family activities.

Representatives from the College of ACES, IDOA, Illinois State FFA officers and 4-H Leadership team members will be present.

The celebration of agriculture includes the announcement of the Illinois Farm Family of the Year Award winner — which is co-sponsored by *Illinois AgriNews* and Burris Hybrids — as well as recipients of the ACES Alumni Association Family Spirit Awards, the Outstanding Young Alumni Award and the 4-H Alumni Award.

The live auction by the Illinois State Auctioneers Association will be held to raise money for the 4-H and FFA foundations and the Orion Samuelson Scholarship Program.

Auction items will range from U of I athletic memorabilia to packages celebrating Illinois agriculture's rich tradition.

Online registration opened Sept. 24 at ecommerce.aces.illinois.edu/salutetoagriculture. The registration deadline is Nov. 6.

Football tickets for this event will be sold online only.

Auction Calendar

Fri., Sept. 26 — 2 Day Public Auction, 10 a.m., Schaffter Equipment, Inc., **Tipton, Mo.**, Wheeler Auctions & Real Estate, (660) 327-5890 or (660) 327-1806.

Fri., Sept. 26 — 73.6 Acres, 10 a.m., Rebecca Wilson, **Mt. Sterling, Ill.**, Sullivan Auctioneers, LLC, (217) 847-2160.

Fri., Sept. 26 — Inventory Reduction Auction, 10 a.m., Wyatt Sales & Service, Inc., **Wyatt, Ind.**, Ball Auction & Realty, (574) 342-8299.

Fri., Sept. 26 — 109 Acres, 2 p.m., Desper-Nichel, **Utica, Ill.**, McConville Realty & Auction, (815) 246-7020.

Fri., Sept. 26 — 93.6 +/- Acres, 6:00 p.m., Verena Koester Estate, **Teutopolis, Ill.**, Schmid Auction & Realty Co., (217) 857-1507.

Sat., Sept. 26 — Toy Auction, 5 p.m., **Arcola, Ill.**, Tri-County Auction, (217) 268-3444.

Sat., Sept. 27 — Tri-County Consignment Sale, 8 a.m., **Arcola, Ill.**, Tri-County Auction, (217) 268-3444.

Sat., Sept. 27 — 367 Acres, 9 a.m., Dale & Linda Doubler, **Cambridge, Ill.**, Stenzel Auction Service, (309) 526-8690.

Sat., Sept. 27 — Public Auction, 9 a.m., Debbie Jackson, **Virden, Ill.**, Cowman Auction, (217) 488-6440.

Sat., Sept. 27 — Hit & Miss Engines-Tractors-Scrap Iron-Equipment, 10 a.m., Jerome "Jerry" Sibley, **Kampsville, Ill.**, Klocke's Auction Service, (618) 396-2563.

Mon., Sept. 29 — 1222 Acres, 9 a.m., Dwaine Bauer Estate, **Hord, Ill.**, Bauer Auction Service, (217) 459-2579.

Mon., Sept. 29 — 730 +/- Acres in 5 Tracts, 1 p.m., Heishman Family Farms, **Milan, Mo.**, Sullivan Auctioneers, LLC, (217) 847-2160.

Mon., Sept. 29 — 57 +/- Acres, 6:30 p.m., **Pine Village, Ind.**, Farmers National Co., (888) 673-4919, ext. 305 or (765) 426-9480.

Tues., Sept. 30 — Quality Farm Equipment, 11 a.m., David & Laura Pezzella, **Quincy, Ill.**, Sullivan Auctioneers, LLC, (217) 847-2160.

Thurs., Oct. 2 — Large Consignment Auction, 9 a.m., **Lagro, Ind.**, Pefley's Farm Equipment, (260) 782-2222.

Thurs., Oct. 2 — 225 Truck Tractors, Straight Trucks & Trailers, 10 a.m., **Bettendorf, Iowa**, US Auctioneers, Inc., (563) 332-5444.

Thurs., Oct. 2 — 56.8 Acres in 4 Tracts, 6 p.m., Farrington Family, etal, **Clinton, Ind.**, Schrader Real Estate & Auction Co., Inc., (800) 451-2709.

Fri., Oct. 3 — Large Public Auction, 9 a.m., **Monrovia, Ind.**, Ted Everett & Kurt Everett, (317) 996-3929.

Sat., Oct. 4 — Real Estate-Antiques-Farm Equip.-Tools & Household, 9 a.m., Ruth & Oliver Westphal, **Maple Park, Ill.**, Espe Auctioneering, (630) 365-9838.

Sat., Oct. 4 — Farm Equip.-Construction Equip.-

Trucks-Trailers & Misc., 9 a.m., 52 & 30 Consignment, **Amboy, Ill.**, Kaufman Auction, (309) 246-6575.

Sat., Oct. 4 — 157.62 Acres +/-, 10 a.m., Estate of George & Charline Sutton, **Mazon, Ill.**, Richard A. Olson & Assoc., Inc., (815) 942-0594.

Sat., Oct. 4 — Antique Farm Equipment Consignment, 10 a.m., Doc's Equipment, **Lacon, Ill.**, Bond Auction Service, (309) 696-0498.

Sat., Oct. 4 — Estate Auction, 10 a.m., Rudy Wagner Estate, **Union Grove, Wis.**, Bob Hagemann Auction & Realty Service, LLC, (262) 534-2134.

Sat., Oct. 4 — Business Closeout Auction, 10 a.m., Vaughan Leasing, **Forrest, Ill.**, Mark Reynolds Auctions, (309) 378-4499.

Sat., Oct. 4 — The Sutton Antique Tractor Collection Auction, 10 a.m., **Litchfield, Ill.**, Aumann Auctions, (888) 282-8648.

Sat., Oct. 4 — Mechanic Tools-Shop Tools-Pickup-Supplies-Automotive Equipment, 10 a.m., Estate of Robert (Bob) Wisdom, **Winchester, Ill.**, Dick Samples, (217) 245-5010.

Sat., Oct. 4 — 40+ Hit & Miss Engines-Miscellaneous, 10 a.m., Art Biagi, Sr. Estate, **Centralia, Ill.**, Gilliland Auction Co., (618) 532-9054.

Sat., Oct. 4 — Real Estate & Personal Property, 10 a.m., Mr. & Mrs. Dean Stephens, **Annapolis, Ill.**, Rothrock Auction, LLC, (618) 442-5257 or (618) 839-5363.

Sat., Oct. 4 — Antique Tractors, Trucks & Machinery Consignment, 11 a.m., **Union, Ill.**, Jurs Auctions, (847) 669-3440 or (847) 702-9641.

Sat., Oct. 4 — Construction Equipment & Lumber, 11 a.m., **Oscoda, Ill.**, Stenzel Auction Service, (309) 944-3808.

Sat., Oct. 4 — 561 Acres in 6 Tracts, 1 p.m., Truscott Farms, **Grayville, Ill.**, Carson Auction & Realty Co., (618) 662-4911 or (618) 838-8917.

Tues., Oct. 7 — 40 Acres m/l, 10 a.m., Georgia Jones & Stan Brown, **Industry, Ill.**, Lowderman Auction Co., (309) 833-5543.

Thurs., Oct. 9 — 36.41 +/- Acres, 12 Noon CST, Mr. & Mrs. Tom Merrill, **Poseyville, Ind.**, William Wilson Auction & Realty Inc., (812) 682-4000.

Sat., Oct. 11 — 83.84 Acres +/-, 11 a.m., James West, Jon West, Marsha Besch, **Geneseo, Ill.**, Roy Holmstrom Auctioneering & Real Estate, (309) 944-4734.

Sat., Oct. 11 — Land & Real Estate, 12:00 p.m., Estate of Bernard "Benny" Unkraut, **Lillyville, Ill.**, Schmid Auction & Realty Co., (217) 857-1507.

Wed., Oct. 15 — 157.5 Acres in 2 Tracts, 11 a.m., Robert Stephen Joy, **Jacksonville, Ill.**, Mark Pennell, (217) 243-1455.

Wed., Oct. 15 — Farmette, Country Home & Outbuildings on 4 Acres, 6 p.m., Zearing Trust #2, **Malden, Ill.**, Johnson Auction Service, (800) 454-2716 or (815) 454-2840.

Thurs., Oct. 16 — 749 Acres, 6 p.m., John & Marty

Beaty, **Casey, Ill.**, Stanfield Auction Co., (217) 345-7772.

Thurs., Oct. 16 — 187.13 Acres in 5 Tracts, 6:30 p.m., Margaret Meadows Estate, **Windfall, Ind.**, Schrader Real Estate & Auction Co., Inc., (800) 451-2709.

Thurs., Oct. 16 — 133 +/- Acres in 6 Tracts, 7 p.m., **Franklin, Ill.**, The Loranda Group, Inc., (800) 716-8189.

Fri., Oct. 17 — 130 Acres in 3 Tracts, 10 a.m., **Golden, Ill.**, The Loranda Group, Inc., (800) 716-8189.

Sat., Oct. 18 — 330 +/- Acres, 10 a.m., Jim & Pat DeCap, **Geneseo, Ill.**, DeCap Realty & Auction, (309) 659-2222.

Sat., Oct. 18 — Real Estate, 10 a.m., **Casey, Ill.**, Auctions & Appraisals of Illiana, LLC, (217) 826-3333.

Sat., Oct. 18 — Farmland, 11 a.m., Roy Tarter, **Taylorville, Ill.**, Mienenheimer Auction Service, (800) 824-9324.

Mon., Oct. 20 — 74.7 Acres, 10:30 a.m., Andrew & Peri Bozdech, **Villa Grove, Ill.**, Gordon Hannagan Auction Co., (217) 568-7117.

Sat., Oct. 25 — Bi-Annual Consignment Auction, 9:30 a.m., **Pecatonica, Ill.**, N.I.T.E. Equipment, (815) 239-9096.

Sat., Oct. 25 — 85 Acres, 10 a.m., Ty Leary Estate, **Orangeville, Ill.**, Filer Auction & Appraisals Inc., (815) 865-9090.

Sat., Oct. 25 — 434 +/- Acres in 17 Tracts, 10 a.m., Cain Family Farm, LLC, **Kendallville, Ind.**, Schrader Real Estate & Auction Co., Inc., (800) 451-2709.

Mon., Oct. 27 — 76 Acres, 10:30 a.m., Larry Michaner, **Broadlands, Ill.**, Gordon Hannagan Auction Co., (217) 568-7117.

Mon., Oct. 27 — 202 +/- Acres in 7 Tracts, 6:30 p.m., Larry W. Riggs, Sabra S. Blackburn & Karen R. McKee, **New Castle, Ind.**, Schrader Real Estate & Auction Co., Inc., (877) 747-0212.

Wed., Oct. 29 — Real Estate, 10 a.m., David Van Fleet Estate, **LaHarpe, Ill.**, Hobby Auction Service, (217) 659-3208.

Fri., Oct. 31 — 334 Acres, 10:30 a.m., Elizabeth Harper & Buland Family, **Earlville, Ill.**, Chris Wegener, (815) 786-2652.

Sat., Nov. 1 — 165 Acres in 8 Tracts, 10 a.m., **Carlock, Ill.**, Robert Yoder Auction Service, (309) 963-4419.

Sat., Nov. 15 — Farm Equipment Consignment, 9:30 a.m., **Thorntown, Ind.**, Collins Equipment, (765) 436-7300.

Livestock

Mon., Oct. 6 — Stocker-Feeder Cattle Auction, 12 Noon, Burt Farms, **Wayne City, Ill.**, Cattlemen's Livestock, Inc., (618) 895-3156.